

Frequently Asked Questions: 2012 RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide

ABOUT THE USER'S GUIDE

Why has the name of the previous study, "Study of Growth Index Performance by School (School Growth Study)," been changed to "RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide?"

The titles are different to reflect two qualitatively different studies. The previous study from 2009 focused on the growth index and the results refer to the normative behavior of participating schools. The 2012 study is designed to provide school level norms for both status and growth in terms of student gains that pertain to the US population of schools. The RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide is so named because it is aimed at giving users a practical guide to the new information about schools only. It does not include details about the study methodology or a deeper discussion about patterns of results.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

What grade levels are included in the 2012 RIT Scale Norms School User's Guide?

Grades K-10 for Mathematics and Reading, grades 2-10 for Language Usage are included.

Are norms for End-of-Course Tests available?

End-of-Course assessment results (e.g. for Algebra I) are included in constructing the norms. No separate school-level norms are available for End-of-Course assessments.

Content area	Grade											
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Reading	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	●
Language Usage			▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	●
Mathematics	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	●
General Science				▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	●
Science Concepts & Processes				▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	●

Note: ● status norms only.

▲ growth and status norms

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

Are 11th and 12th grade norms part of the 2012 RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide?

No. There were insufficient numbers of schools to support a norming study for these grade levels.

Are General Science and Science Concepts and Processes part of the 2012 RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide?

No. There were insufficient numbers of schools to support a norming study in these content areas.

Is there growth data for MAP Science tests in the 2012 RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide?

No. There are no school-level norms for General Science or Science Concepts and Processes.

USING the study WITH REPORTS (Which?)

Can I use the mean growth from the Achievement Status and Growth class reports with the 2012 RIT Scale School Norms User's Guide?

No. It is important to keep in mind that the behavior of a non-randomly formed group of students, like those you find in a classroom or a school, should be compared with the distribution of similar units of aggregations. The distribution of “groups” is generally different, and “tighter,” than the distribution of individuals.

Can I use data from the Student Growth District Summary reports with the 2012 RIT Scale School Norms User’s Guide?

The norms apply only to school-level summaries, unless you are a one-school district.

INTERPRETING THE DATA

What is the minimum number of students that can be within a school when interpreting this data?

The norms in this study are applicable for school-level aggregates of 10 or more students.

In Appendix A, I noticed that the approximate 50th percentile did not always equal the 50th percentile in our 2011 Normative Data document. Is this to be expected?

RIT levels from the student norms and the school-level norms should be close, but not necessarily equal at their respective 50th percentiles. Users should also not expect similar RIT levels for percentiles that are away from the middle of their respective distributions. Again, it is important to appreciate the difference between the distribution of non-randomly formed groups of students that are your schools from the distribution of individual students.

The RIT values on the tables seem to jump. What do I do if I am between two values?

The skips are result of formatting constraints. Interpolations between neighboring values provide the answers you need.

Does NWEA provide school norms for schools that have calculated the proportion of students that meet or exceed their growth norm?

The 2009 school growth norms were estimated by taking the observed performance of the schools who participated in the norming study and creating percentile ranks based on the proportion of students who met or exceeded their growth norm. A similar statistic was also estimated in the 2011 school growth norms. However, this statistic represented a slightly different but more accurate definition of the proportion of students that meet or exceed their growth norms. The new approach is more technically sound, but it requires a change in the way we present this metric in reports. Because that change is currently unavailable, we decided to not include this metric in the current reports.

Why couldn’t a teacher just use his/her class mean and make the calculation just for his/her class? Is this possible?

The school norms are designed to look at how a school is performing relative to other schools, leading to appreciation of what we would often call “school effects.” The classroom mean represents how a typical student from that classroom performed when compared to the performance of other comparable students. To understand how that classroom performed, as represented by the classroom mean result, we need to refer to the 2011 RIT Scale School Norms User’s Guide instead.

Can you please explain why NWEA can say this represents ALL other grade levels across the country? Wasn’t NWEA data strictly used for the methodologies and calculations? What does this mean?

We can compare across the country because of the method we used to draw and weight the sample to be representative of schools across the country. What was done specifically in our case was that we introduced into our study additional data about how our schools compare with schools across the country in terms of key educationally related factors. Careful weighting of our data led us to nationally representative results. This would be similar to exit polling during an election or other surveys. Without this additional step, users can only understand how their schools performed in relation to NWEA schools alone – certainly a more limited reference group for the purposes of learning what growth may be possible. This is a major step forward when compared to the 2009 study.